The Compound

by S.A. Bodeen

Dystopian Fiction – the setting

Setting has a tremendous impact on the tone and mood of a story. It is the basis for everything that happens in a story. For dystopian fiction, the setting is particularly important because almost everything else is influenced by it. Aspects of the setting include time and place, but it also includes other aspects of the situation.

* Geographic location (where/place)
  + specific (Boston, Canada)
  + general (a city, a country)
  + descriptive
* time period (when)
  + past, present, future
  + morning, afternoon, evening
  + date
* atmosphere
  + dangerous
  + stressful
  + humorous
  + scary
  + mysterious
* surroundings/environment
  + weather – snowing, raining
  + temperature – hot, cold
  + winter, spring, summer, fall
  + furniture, plants
  + colors
  + sensory details (sounds, smells)

**Ask yourself these questions to help you recognize and understand setting:**

* Where is it?
* When is it?
* What is the weather like?
* What are the social conditions?
* What is the landscape or environment like?
* What special details make the setting vivid?

Often the setting of dystopian literature is a futuristic society. The majority these societies start after a catastrophic event such as war, disease, or natural disaster. There may be a history of an apocalypse or a post-apocalyptic society before organized societies took place after the disaster. In these societies there is some kind of oppressive control of the people, often governmental. People are often segregated into groups not of their choosing with no opportunity to change. There is propaganda given that all the conditions that exist are for the good of the people. Usually there is some type of control exerted over the characters in the story. Various types of control can be used in the societies of dystopian fiction.

**Types of Dystopian Controls**

        • **Corporate control:** One or more large corporations control society through products, advertising, and/or the media. Examples include *Minority Report* and *Running Man*.

        • **Bureaucratic control**: Society is controlled by a mindless bureaucracy through a tangle of red tape, relentless regulations, and incompetent government officials. Examples in film include *Brazil*.

        • **Technological control**: Society is controlled by technology—through computers, robots, and/or scientific means. Examples include *The Matrix*, *The Terminator*, and *I, Robot*.

        • **Philosophical/religious control:** Society is controlled by philosophical or religious ideology often enforced through a dictatorship or theocratic government.

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Below are some questions to ask yourself to analyze details about the setting. Answer the questions and provide the text evidence to support you answer.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **The Setting** | | |
| **Ask yourself:** | Short Answer | Text Evidence (include page #) |
| **Where is it?** |  |  |
| **When is it?** |  |  |
| **What is the atmosphere like?** |  |  |
| **What are the social conditions?** |  |  |
| **What is the appearance of the rooms like?** |  |  |
| **What special details make the setting vivid?** |  |  |
| **What type of leadership control is used?** |  |  |
| **http://udleditions.cast.org/craft\_elm.html** |  |  |

Write a description of the setting in *The Compound*. Use as many of the above details as possible in your response.

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Below is a list of the rooms of the compound. Locate the information given about the location; then give any other information about the rooms. Page numbers for some of the rooms have been provided.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The Compound Layout | | | |
| Room | Page # | Location | Description & Contents |
| Beauty  Salon |  |  |  |
| Dance Studio |  |  |  |
| Eddy’s  Room | 36 |  |  |
| Family  Room | 40 |  |  |
| Gym |  |  |  |
| Infirmary |  |  |  |
| Kitchen |  |  |  |
| Laundry/  Sewing Room |  |  |  |
| Lexie’s  Room |  |  |  |
| Library | 42 |  |  |
| Parent’s  Room | 41 |  |  |
| Poultry Livestock |  |  |  |
| Rock Climbing Wall |  |  |  |
| Teresa’s  Room | 40 |  |  |
| Theater/Media Room |  |  |  |
| Warehouse |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Using the details you have found in the text, draw a diagram of**  **the layout of the compound. Remember there is more than one floor.** | | | |